



# THE 7 HARDEST WORKOUT CLASSES IN NEW YORK CITY

GOOD SWEAT

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It's a cliché that New Yorkers thrive on intensity and stress, but it feels true on the boutique fitness scene. Or at least part of it, where the thrill of discomfort via punishing pull-up reps and [kettlebell swings](#) is alive and well—or alive and in desperate need of [foam rolling](#).

Over the course of nearly six years, I've tried almost all of it, and to report this story, I went back to re-experience many classes and methods multiple times to find the absolute toughest workouts in NYC.

Some disclaimers: There are bound to be boot camps in secret Brooklyn basement gyms I missed, and difficulty is somewhat subjective. My body type, for example, makes running a breeze and lifting heavy harrowing, but I've tried to be as objective as possible, using my vast context for comparison (and the feedback of *many* others).

There are also many, many classes that are crazy challenging that I didn't include—and I left CrossFit out because it's its own genre, entirely. (Please add your additions, angry disagreement, and any other feedback in the Comments.)

But these seven stood out for pushing you to a physical place so challenging it often elicits an emotional response—or a gag reflex.

I chose them because I couldn't physically keep going, because my muscles shook uncontrollably, because I felt like the Pizza Rat descending the subway steps for days after, dragging my heavy, exhausted limbs behind me (and wishing they were a delicious slice, because I was so f\*cking hungry).

It's all very dramatic when you're talking about office professionals paying \$35 per hour for flat abs, but New York is theater, whether you're on Broadway or banging out burpees.

## GET STARTED



(Photo: Robert Caplin)

### Tone House

The rest of the list is in no particular order, but sports conditioning workout [Tone House](#) takes the [\(gluten-free\) cake](#), hands down, for the hardest class in NYC.

The most telling detail is the warm-up, which, on its own, is harder than probably 75 percent of the full-length workouts offered around town. You're moving your feet crazy quick and throwing your chest to the ground from the get-go, and after plyometric-packed circle drills, you move into relays that feel like an endless succession of push-ups and sprints, burpees and sprints, all at a race speed. [Then to the props](#), working your muscles with resistance bands, weighted harnesses, pushing and pulling sleds. At some point during a relay

circuit, I sat out one interval, which is something that seriously hurts my pride, but that I felt forced into by bile rising in my throat.

It needs to be said: Tone House is an extremely friendly place owned by possibly the nicest trainer, [Alonzo Wilson](#), who truly wants everyone to succeed, together—which is why he built his concept around teamwork. (It's just that his team is, well, pro.) Trainers are super upbeat and encourage you without fail, and high fives abound. Nothing sums it up better than this insight from a real Yelp review: "A fellow participant looked over at me and said, 'Wasn't that awful? I can't wait to come back.'"